

UNCLASSIFIED

HEADQUARTERS
38TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON (MECZ)
APO 230 U. S. ARMY

AFTER/AFTER ACTION REPORT
FOR
PERIOD 1-31 MARCH 1945

Robert E. O'Brien Jr.
ROBERT E. O'BRIEN JR.,
Lt Col, 38th Cav Recon Sq (MECZ),
Commanding.

REGRADED **UNCLASSIFIED** BY AUTHORITY
OF *OSD memo at May 2, 1972*
BY *DAK rough* ON *5/12/92*

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

The month of March brought with it the return of extended mounted thrusts and strategic moves, the type of warfare for which the Squadron was designed, equipped, and trained. The month started with a dismounted river crossing, followed by a five day dash to the Ahr River, reminiscent of the move across Belgium last September. Mid-month the squadron marched some 400 miles in two days, moving to the Seventh Army in Alsace. The closing days of March found the squadron morosely guarding the German-French border in Alsace, casting envious glances up north at the Third and First Armies dashing into the heart of Germany. As though in answer to the unanimous wishes of all members of the squadron, movement orders were received on the 29th of March and in the closing hours of the Month the squadron was poised 50 miles east of the Rhine awaiting orders to penetrate deeper into the heart of Germany.

March 1; The squadron was in scattered positions on the left flank of the Roer River opposite Urft lake dams. Squadron headquarters, Troops C, E, and F, were in the vicinity of Eicherscheid, Troop A was to the east in Dedenborn, Troop B was up in the woods about two miles east of Schmidt, where they had marched the night before with a view of taking over positions from elements of the 78th Division, relieving them for movement across the Roer River at Heimback. Meanwhile plans were afoot for the squadron to effect a crossing of their own around Dam #4 at Ruhrberg, so all troops were held in readiness awaiting developments. At 2000A and 2115A Troop E fired diversionary missions. Otherwise all was quiet.

March 2; The squadron received the mission of crossing the Roer River to the Kermeter Peninsula with the purpose of reconnoitering and clearing the East-West road from 046240 to 074251. As the enemy situation was unknown in this area, it was deemed advisable to approach the peninsula from the flank as well as frontally. Troop A moved to Ruhrberg, dismounted and crossed the Roer to the Kermeter Peninsula, using the 102nd Cavalry Squadron's foot bridge at Dam #4. They proceeded up the precipitous banks of the hill without enemy opposition and assembled on high ground at the northwest section of the peninsula.

Troop B moved dismounted from their location east of Schmidt to the river and crossed at a point due south of Schmidt. The crossing was effected by wading, the water depth being 2 1/2 feet. Climbing the cliffs, the troops moved to the main cross roads in the center of the peninsula, which was secured without enemy contact. Patrols were dispatched to the south to contact elements of the 2nd Infantry Division.

Troop C proceeded from Eicherscheid dismounted to the river and started to make a crossing with the use of rubber boats. Becoming impatient with the length of time this was taking, Captain Rogers led his troop, wading across the river. Encountering no enemy they also climbed the cliff and assembled in the center of the peninsula.

At about 1700, Corps Engineers had constructed a vehicular bridge across Dam #4 and filled several craters in the snake road climbing the hill side. The movement of the squadron's vehicles across was commenced shortly after dark and by daylight the movement was completed despite intense darkness, rutted and narrow roads, and the continuous threat of heavily mined shoulders.

~~SECRET~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 3: On the night of 2-3 March Squadron Headquarters moved over to the peninsula and the rear echelon moved up to Ruhrberg. Reconnaissance troops swept the areas they had passed through in darkness and E and F Troops moved across to assembly areas on the peninsula, E Troop going immediately into battery position.

The mission of cleaning the Kermeter peninsula had been accomplished. Resistance appeared only in the form of weather, terrain, abatis, and numerous mines. Again all members of the command were impressed with the cleverness characterized in the concealment of the Siegfried pill boxes and fortification, and the scope of observation and field of fire afforded from these positions. The question was widely discussed to how such defenses, if properly manned and supported, could ever be taken.

Back in February the 2nd Ranger Battalion had been attached to the Group and three companies had trained to team with the 38th Squadron. Now came the opportunity to wed these troops with the squadron, so, on the evening of 3 March, Companies A, B, and C were attached to Troops A, C, and B respectively and, from the Kermeter Peninsula all the way to the Ahr River, these Ranger companies accompanied the Cavalry troops, riding in vehicles and deploying in each instance of battle.

At the neck of the peninsula, some delaying resistance was encountered. The bulk of this was borne by the Ranger Battalion, at this time fighting as a single unit. Their right flank was secure against friendly positions across the Roer River but between their left flank and the 2nd Infantry Division there was a gap of about two miles. B Troop was given the mission of protecting this flank and spent the day actively engaged, with the aid of an attached platoon of engineers to assist in the removal of abatis and mines.

Meanwhile the III Corps to the Squadron's north was moving east, and the Squadron received the mission of keeping contact with them and protecting their right flank.

4 March: By early morning the extensively mined abatis just west of F. Mariawald was cleared and B Troop took off for Hergarten. Proceeding through Heimbach, Lt Yontz, with a small reconnaissance party, reported his position at Vlaten as of 0915A. No opposition was met until the point arrived at the far (southern) edge of Hergarten, where the Germans were waiting on the high ground, well dug-in, and supported by machine gun, mortar, light artillery, and several self-propelled anti-tank weapons. The second platoon was caught in an artillery barrage and lost Lt Smith, S/Sgt Whittard, and Sgt Phipps; leaving the platoon in charge of Sgt Oxenham, who took over and did an admirable job of carrying the platoon to the fulfillment of its mission. Meanwhile the third platoon was brought up through the town with an artillery forward observer and the attached Rangers. The ridge line between Hergarten and Duttling. This they accomplished without loss, taking four prisoners and knocking out two machine gun positions by tank action.

Troop A arrived at Hergarten in the early afternoon in the midst of this action and moved into defensive positions on high ground on the left (North) flank of B Troop. After the action died down, they sent a patrol to Berg, a town about 2 1/2 miles distant. The patrol returned at 2400A reporting the town deserted by the enemy.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Troop C arrived at Hergarten at 1400A, set up a command post in town. The first platoon was dispatched to the town of Duttling, a mile to the south-east, to secure and outpost the town. Shortly after occupying the town without resistance, the platoon observed a small group of enemy, who had been in hiding, attempting to escape. Fire on this group injured one and the remainder succeeded in escaping. Shortly afterwards, an enemy patrol approached the village from the south-east. Sergeant McTague allowed the patrol to come within close range before opening fire, and was successful in killing two, wounding one and taking two prisoners. The platoon was subjected to heavy mortar fire and suffered two casualties but managed to spot the enemy observer, bringing artillery on him, and thus causing the cessation of mortar fire.

Troop E moved into battery position in the vicinity of Vlaten during the afternoon and fired one supporting mission.

Company F, moving up in support, moved into a field at the Vlaten CR in the early afternoon. The sixth tank into the field hit a Teller mine. Lt Koak was thrown out of the tank by the explosion, receiving light injuries. He was evacuated, but returned to duty in a week. The tank hull was so damaged that ordnance had to salvage the tank.

Squadron Headquarters, on the road all day closely following the reconnaissance Troops, was held up just short of Hergarten by a concentration of enemy artillery falling between them and the town and moved in when this lifted at about 1600A.

Duttling was the objective of the 9th Infantry Regiment. At about 2020A the 1st Battalion of this regiment walked into the town and "C" Troop handed it over to them.

5 March: The squadron continued on its mission of keeping contact with the 78th Division on the north and protecting the left flank of V Corps. Momentum was gathered which increased the confusion of the enemy withdrawal and resulted in the ultimate capture of numerous prisoners and extensive equipment during the course of the next few days.

Troop A moved out at 1030A, proceeded to Floisdorf, without incident at 1130A and moved north-east three miles to Schwerfen. At 1500A the troop moved east some four miles to the Obergatten, Firmenich, Satzvey area. In Obergatten the third platoon contacted elements of the 78th Reconnaissance Troop, who entered the town from the north simultaneously with the platoon entry from the south. Firmenich was entered without resistance as was Satzvey also, the enemy having withdrawn after demolishing the bridge at the southeast edge of the latter town.

Pressing on, the first platoon was dispatched to the southeast to Lessenich which they occupied and outposted without incident. At 2330A the third platoon moved through Lessenich and occupied Antweiler, two miles to the southeast. Other than sporadic, light enemy artillery fire, no resistance was met during the day and eleven enemy prisoners were taken.

Troop B moved out passing through the 78th Division zone to the Schwerfen from the north. They turned south to Gaha where they entered the town under light enemy mortar and artillery fire, reached the south end, and surprised

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100 odd enemy who were laying mines along the main east-west highway 800 yards south of Geln. Artillery was brought to bear on this group, resulting in 30 observed casualties and dispersal of the remainder.

Troop C followed in reserve moving to Berg at 1400A and at 2300A to Firmenich.

The day's action netted the squadron 53 prisoners, 30 known enemy casualties, a trailer load of ammunition and an ammunition dump of 900 150MM shells.

6 March: At 0130A, Troop "B" moved from Schwerfen to Sattney to relieve units of the 78th Division reported to be holding the high ground south-east of the town. Arriving at this point, the troop found that not only were there no friendly troops in the area, but the trestle bridge across the river south of the town was knocked out of position rendering it useless for the passage of vehicles. Dismounted parties were immediately dispatched to wade the river and occupy and prepare to defend the high ground on the other side. Meanwhile, using their reconnaissance tanks and working in complete darkness, B Troop undertook to repair the bridge by pulling the displaced section back into position. After two hours the bridge was in usable condition and the troop vehicles moved across into position. They remained here for the balance of the day.

Troop A occupied Antweiler during the morning and in the afternoon moved eastward to Arloff and Iversheim. Opposition was met in Iversheim and as a result of a light fire fight six enemy casualties were counted, and two prisoners taken.

In this action which took place as darkness was falling, S/Sgt Naldrett led a four man patrol into Iversheim to reconnoiter the town. As the patrol approached the town two groups of enemy were seen, but due to the poor light it was impossible to estimate their number. S/Sgt Naldrett decided to feel out their strength by engaging them in a fire fight. Deploying his small force, he advanced on these enemy groups with marching fire. The effect of this attack was to kill four and wound two of the enemy. The remainder dispersed. Sending a messenger back with the information he had so far, S/Sgt Naldrett advanced with his now three man patrol through enemy mortar fire into the edge of the town where he was fired on by two enemy machine gun positions. With this information he returned to his platoon leader who softened the machine gun positions with mortar fire and attacked the town with the whole platoon.

In order to pin point this mortar fire on the enemy positions, S/Sgt Naldrett went back to the town and, selecting a house between the two enemy machine guns, set it on fire with an incendiary grenade. After the mortar barrage, the platoon moved into town and found it clear. About an hour later elements of the 2nd Reconnaissance Troop rolled into town, and departed shortly afterwards. Iversheim, the 2nd Division's objective for the day, was secured and ready to be handed over to them but no troops arrived to occupy the town until the following day.

During the afternoon Troop C moved to Arloff and relieved elements of Troop A.

1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Squadron Headquarters moved forward to Kreuzweingarten and the rear echelon displaced to Schwerfen.

The Squadron took 34 prisoners during the day.

7 March: At 070001A March 1945, Lt Col O'Brien, Squadron Commander, issued the following Field Order.

FO # 6

Maps: GSGS 4507, 1/50,000, Sheets 40 and 60. (Overlay attached)

1. a. Enemy information: The enemy is continuing his withdrawal movement to the East. He is leaving small delaying forces behind as he moves. These forces are unformed and have only normal infantry support means. Artillery has been non-existent in the past two days. He does have some mortar. As he moved to East he is leaving soldiers behind dressed in civilian clothes. Some troops are deserting the ranks under the cover of the hasty movement to the East and are changing into civilian clothes to prevent capture. Both of these types are dangerous to our troops and will act on any information they are able to obtain. Heavy minefield reported at RJ 409215. Both AT and AP. An AT mine field at 387206.

b. The 78th Division on our right advances in zone to take objective shown on overlay. The 2nd Inf Div advances in zone on left. The 102nd Cav Gp protects the right flank of 78th Inf Div in zone shown on overlay. 102nd Cav Ron Sq advances at dawn 7 March on route shown to relieve elements of 78th Inf Div in SCHEUREN and executes reconnaissance to the E, SE and S from that town. 102d Cav Sq also advances to CR at 920205 at dawn 7 March. Squadron also contacts Troop B, 38th Cav Sq at contact points indicated on request of this headquarters.

2. 38th Cav Sq and Co A, B and C 2d Ranger Bn (atcd) protects right flank 78th Div by advancing in Group zone and by relieving elements of 78th Div on right of 78th Div zone.

3. a. Troop A (atcd Co A, 2nd Ranger Bn and one plat Co F, 38th Cav Sq) move on route shown to QUECKENBERG (482219) early 7 March on Sq order. Reconnoiter to QUECKENBERG at first light 7 March. Follow battalion 309th Inf Regt and relieve that battalion on successive terrain features as it advances. Reconnoiter to South into Group zone immediately behind right battalion 309th Inf. Send in O to Hq 309th Inf Regt at Flammersheim or Schwiheim. To report locations and intentions of all battalions of that regiment.

b. Troop C follow Troop B 102d Cav Sq on route shown to Scheuren (410180). Pass through that Troop on Sq order to force reconnaissance to SE in Group zone. Cross phase line 5 and 6 on Sq order only.

atcd:

CO B, 2nd Ranger Bn.
one plat, Co B 112th Engr Bn.
one plat, Co B, 612th TD Bn.
one plat, Co F, 38th Cav Ron Sq.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

c. Troop B (attached to Co C 2nd Ranger Bn) is relieved from present mission and will follow Troop C closely prepared to support that Troop. Protect Troop C right flank to contact point with 102d Cav Recon Sq.

d. Co F (attached Co B 612th TD Bn (two Platoons)) follow Troop B closely prepared to support Troop B or Troop C.

e. Troop E follow Co F prepared to support any element of Sq in Group zone only. Keep one platoon in battery at all times.

f. Sq Hq follows Co F.

x. Temporary Corps boundary is in effect.

y. Maximum use will be made of bazookas for anti-tank defense.

z. Troop messengers report to Sq CP at 071800A March with bedding rolls.

4. SOP.

5. SOP.

The Squadron started out on the new mission with Troop C in the lead and headed for the Ahr River. Leaving Arloff with the 2nd Platoon Lt. Wilkerson proceeded uneventfully to the south and east until he arrived at Ober Kralingen. Upon entering this small village, a couple of hap hazard shots were received from the windows of buildings occupied by an undetermined number of enemy. Lt Wilkerson, who judged this to be a service unit retreating to the Rhine and not too full of fight, called to them through an interpreter to come out of the houses and surrender. The reply to this offer was several more rifle shots from the houses but after a few rounds of 37mm had been fired into the nearest houses resistance ended and the platoon shook down the village, netting some fifty prisoners.

At this point Lt Farmer came up with the third platoon and a platoon of F Company tanks, on his way through to Kreuzberg and Altenahr. Meeting the first platoon and annexing it to his task force, Lt Farmer started them out in the lead, following with his original force. The second platoon remained to clean out the town and evacuate their prisoners.

The force proceeded down the road, making lateral reconnaissance of all side roads without incident until they approached the railroad tracks at Kreuzberg (453132). Here a column of enemy was proceeding down the road. Fire was brought upon them, and Lt Farmer came to the head of his column to direct the action. The first platoon was left at the road junction to prevent enemy elements from coming up the Ahr River road behind the force and the remainder rolled on to Kreuzberg.

As he approached the first river crossing at the edge of Kreuzberg, Lt Farmer halted the car and proceeded alone to reconnoiter the bridge. Determining the bridge to be safe for crossing he motioned the column to move forward behind him. Moving into the town he surprised three enemy soldiers and forced them to surrender before they could spread the alarm. Pressing on immediately to exploit the advantage of surprise he had gained, Lt Farmer mounted his armored car and drove on through the town to the second crossing. As he

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

neared this bridge, he observed between 200 and 250 enemy soldiers making their way across the railroad bridge just to the left of the bridge. The Germans were apparently unaware of his approach and Lt Farmer sped forward in an attempt to cut off the head of the enemy group at the far end of the bridge. As the enemy observed his advance he fired a burst with his .50 calibre machine gun and shouted for them to surrender. The Germans answered this with rifle fire and sought cover behind the railroad embankment. Unwilling to lose contact with this force, Lt Farmer dismounted and armed with his carbine ran over to the railroad embankment about 100 yards away. Here he encountered four enemy and after an exchange of shots took one prisoner. He took his prisoner back to the armored car and returned alone again to the railroad embankment just in time to catch 15 Germans running toward a cave entrance in the side of a hill a short distance to the front. He chased after them, firing on the run and calling to them to halt. Before his determined charge they threw down their guns and surrendered.

Lt. Farmer then herded this group over to the cave, and found other enemy soldiers inside. Covering the entrance with his carbine, he forced them to come out one at a time and throw down their weapons. When the column came around the bend they were amazed to see Lt Farmer standing at the cave entrance with 150 prisoners.

Leaving the third platoon and a section of tanks to secure these bridges and guard the prisoners, Lt Farmer sent the second platoon on ahead towards Altenahr, placing his own armored car behind the first section; but after only a short spell of this he decided that the point was moving too slow and moved his armored car into the lead position.

Lt Farmer proceeded on to Altenahr. Approaching the town, a small force of enemy was engaged. They were located on top of a cliff, rising some thirty feet above the road and blocking the only route leading into the town. This enemy force consisted of approximately a platoon of men armed with machine gun, machine pistols, rifles, grenades and panzerfausts. They were commanded by a German major. As the enemy opened fire on Lt Farmer's car with machine guns and panzerfaust, Tec 5 Cantrell skillfully maneuvered the armored car out of the path of the panzerfaust projectile and at the same time opened fire on riflemen on the cliff with his pistol. The car was saved from receiving a direct hit by the driver's quick thinking; and immediately Lt Farmer, in the turret, opened fire with the .50 calibre machine gun, killing one Panzerfaust man and pinning down the machine gun crew, killing or wounding four of the enemy. During this action, the whole time of which the armored car was under small arms and machine gun fire, the enemy threw in several barrages of mortar fire. One of these resulted in severing the radio antennae on the outside of the car. When this occurred, Lt Farmer left the protection of his car and, exposed to the enemy fire ran to the armored car in his rear to transmit a message, while the radio operator Tec 4 McDaviltz climbed on the outside of the vehicle and under intense enemy fire, repaired the damage. While this was going on Tec 5 Cantrell and Tec 5 Mastriocovo manned the vehicular guns, keeping the enemy position under steady fire. This force was shortly liquidated, but not until Captain Lewis of F Company, who had come up to see how his tank platoon was making out, was killed in an effort to clear the enemy from the dominating ground.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Captain Lewis had been riding with the column in his 1/4 ton vehicle and, curious as to the reason for the delay in advance and aroused by the noise of the fight, had come up to the front to see if there was any manner in which he could deploy his tanks to advantage. Seeing that the terrain prohibited the deployment of tanks and that the bottleneck was caused by this force of Germans on the cliff covering the road, he headed up the cliff to attempt to dislodge the enemy. Lt Farmer immediately sent up Pfc Burks to assist him. At the moment Pfc Burks was the only man available for dismounted work. Lt Farmer sent word down the column for additional personnel, but these two did not wait for them to arrive. Meanwhile Lt Farmer remained on his .50 calibre gun keeping the enemy on the hill under fire, and called up the armored car behind him to assist. This car came up and gunner Tec 5 Hernandez joined in and delivered fire on the enemy until he was killed in the turret a minute later, whereupon point bentam driver, Tec 5 Sullivan, took over his position and continued to give supporting fire.

Captain Lewis reached the top of the cliff, firing as he advanced, and was seen to take cover, reload his M-1 rifle and move out toward an enemy machine gun and bazooka position scarcely 50 yards away. He was half-way to the nest when an explosive missile, aimed directly at him, burst at his feet and he fell to the ground. Later, when the cliff was secured, he was found dead in the spot he had fallen.

Pfc Burks coming up behind Captain Lewis carried on the fight single handedly. Armed with a rifle and hand grenades, he wounded several enemy, drove off at least ten more and captured five. When his rifle jammed and he had run out of hand grenades, he drove off the remainder with his clubbed rifle. Holding the hill by himself, pending the arrival of the dismounted party being formed by the second platoon, he remained on the cliff until he observed an enemy self-propelled gun slowly approaching down the main road through Altenahr. He then descended from the hill to give warning of this new threat to Lt Farmer who led one of the supporting tanks up into position to engage the enemy guns.

At this point, the dismounted party having come forward, Pfc Burks volunteered to guide them up the cliff and into the positions he had just finished clearing of enemy. Sgt McFague was in charge of the group and was taking up two machine guns and crews to mount in position on the hill top and deliver covering fire into the enemy position in town as the rest of Lt Farmer's force advanced. After leading the party to the position on top of the hill, Burks declared that he knew the location of some enemy position at the front and, arming himself with some rifle grenades, he started crawling forward. In a few moments, he began to fire, and as he fired he moved forward trying for a better position. Sgt McFague shouted at him, telling him not to go out so far alone, but he evidently could not hear as he kept advancing. The entire party was receiving a heavy mortar barrage along with small arms fire and the small arms fire directed at Pfc Burks was extremely heavy. He continued advancing however, and was quite exposed each time he stopped to fire as he had to lean over the rocky ledge he was crawling along in order to aim his piece. While taking one of these shots he was hit through the side of the neck by a rifle bullet, which seriously wounded him. From the top of the cliff an enemy self-propelled gun could be seen approaching the scene, and a section of tanks was called up, from their position of rear guard to meet this threat. Sgt Lindquist came up with the tank section, rounded the turn, and came directly into line of fire of the enemy self-propelled gun. He immediately backed to cover.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

threw in a smoke shell against the building near the enemy gun to blind it, then pulled forward and at point blank range, eliminated the enemy gun.

Lt Farmer realized that the enemy force was too large for him to assault with the forces he had and called for assistance. While awaiting the arrival of Company B of the Rangers, who were to answer this call, he maintained small arms, machine gun, mortar, and tank gun fire on the enemy. It was subsequently discovered that mortar shells made direct hits on two enemy self-propelled guns in Altenahr, setting them on fire.

With the arrival of the Ranger Company the assault on the town was commenced. Supported by S/Sgt Lindquist with his tank section, the rangers and dismounted cavalymen moved down the main street of town and cleaned the enemy out, house by house. The force moved through the first part of the town as far as the Altenahr Bridge, got elements across, securing the bridge intact, and awaited first light to complete clearing the town.

While this action was taking place up at the front of the column, Sgt Sacha and his tank section, which had been left behind at Kreuzberg to guard the bridges to the rear, was having a little action. After an uneventful wait of two hours, Sgt Sacha sighted an enemy column consisting of an American motorcycle and 1/4 ton and a German truck coming down the road toward him. Allowing this trio to advance within 50 yards in order to positively identify them as enemy, Sgt Sacha fired his first round at the truck in the rear. This proved to be loaded with ammunition and immediately exploded. Enemy in the other vehicles immediately stopped and dismounted with their hands in the air. Accepting their surrender, Sgt Sacha found that one of the passengers in the 1/4 ton truck was a German officer, and the 1/4 ton itself was one the Germans had captured from the 106th Infantry Division last December. Also, a German supply train was observed by Major Rousek crossing the river at a point about 2000 yards west of Kreuzberg, in an attempt to flee to the south. Direct fire of the Squadron's attached tank destroyer platoon was brought to bear on this target by Major Rousek at a range of 1700 yards, from the high ground above Kreuzberg. This resulted in the total destruction of four motor trucks and eleven horse drawn vehicles.

Meanwhile B Troop, moving on the north flank, had occupied the towns of Schewern and Hammerath. Lt Yontz, with the second platoon, encountered a force of enemy on the march near Bingenback, took them under fire, throwing them into confusion, and moved in to take 52 prisoners, and three horse-drawn wagons of equipment. At the close of day the entire troop moved into Kreuzberg, and outposted the high ground to the south for the night.

Troop A had assembled in Kirspenich in the early morning and moved along on the Squadron left flank, keeping contact with the 309th Infantry Regiment. They passed through the towns of Queckenberg, Todenfeld and Hilberath without incident and contacted enemy at Vischel. At this village, S/Sgt Tietjen with the 3rd platoon engaged a small enemy force who were in the process of digging in. The result of this action was 13 enemy killed and 9 prisoners taken. The second platoon passed through Calentorn and, south of the town, came upon an enemy machine gun position where they killed 5 enemy and took two prisoners. In this action Private John H. Anderson was responsible for the detection of enemy outpost positions. A member of the patrol led by Cpl Abrams, which originally proceeded to this high ground, Pvt Anderson observed an enemy outpost of two men at the top of the hill. Halting the balance of the patrol he

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

worked his way around to the right flank of the enemy and, gaining surprise, was able to capture both before they could give an alarm. The patrol then circled the wooded area without finding other enemy and was about to return when they received fire killing one member of the patrol. While the balance of the patrol went back for help, Pvt Anderson remained in position and, by the time help arrived, had located the exact position of an enemy machine gun and was able to give them information leading to the destruction of two enemy machine guns and five personnel without a single casualty for his platoon. After dark, elements of the troop were sent to Mayschoss with the purpose of diverting the enemy's full attention from the battle C Troop was waging at Altenahr; but due to the difficulties of the terrain, they did not arrive until light of the following morning.

8 March: Troop C cleared the remainder of Altenahr, taking over 100 prisoners and Troop A moved into Mayschoss, also taking 60 prisoners. The balance of the Squadron moved into Altenahr. A patrol from Troop B was sent up the river road and contacted friendly units in force at Bad Neuenahr. The battle for the Ahr River had been won, and the escape route of the enemy to the Ludendorff bridge at Remagen had been cut.

As a result of the Squadron's activities over the past two day period, they had taken 400 prisoners, killed more than 60 enemy soldiers, destroyed 26 unarmed vehicles, 2 Mark IV tanks, 1 towed and 2 self-propelled guns. They had secured three bridges, one vehicular tunnel and two rail road tunnels, intact. An inventory of the rolling stock, left abandoned in this vicinity revealed 150 cars loaded with 2 75mm self-propelled guns, 14 car loads of 75mm and mortar ammunition; over 40 passenger vehicles, over 20 trucks, 1 anti-aircraft gun mounted on truck chassis, 8 half-tracks, stores of wireless supplies, power telephones, and related signal equipment.

9 March: All elements of the Squadron assembled in Altenahr, with the exception of Troop A, which remained in Mayschoss. The area was patrolled and 6 prisoners were taken during the day. The Squadron rested and cleaned up, welcoming a day free of missions. Local security was kept posted in the area and the captured enemy equipment in the area was inventoried. The bridges and tunnels were guarded.

10-13 March: The Squadron under secret orders moved a road distance of 406 miles to Marmoutier, France, where we temporarily were attached to VI Corps of the 7th U. S. Army.

The first day of the march 253 miles were covered and the Squadron closed at Verdun, France 2400A, bivouacing in woods six miles north-east of the city.

The second day of march, covered 150 miles and the squadron closed at Marmoutier at 1800A. Each troop was assigned a neighboring village for billeting purposes as follows:

Troop A--Zehnacker	Troop E--Allenwiller
Troop B--Kleingoeft	Company F--Reuterbourg
Troop C--Knoersheim	Sq Hq and H1 Troop--Marmoutier

This march was marked by the first taste of heavy road dust since Normandy.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

16-18 March: Squadron remained in the Marmoutier area. Performing weapon, vehicle, and radio maintenance, and personal hygiene. VI Corps Ordnance teams made vehicle tests and small arms checks. The VI Corps CWS officer made spot checks of gas masks and all troops passed through the gas chamber. The reconnaissance troops trained intensively in the use of the new knee type 60mm mortar. All gunners signified absolute approval of this new weapon.

Roads and bridges between the squadron area and the front line were reconnoitered with a view of probable use and the squadron remained in VI Corps reserve.

19 March: Squadron remained in Corps reserve and moved to new assembly area Neiderbronn, Overbron, Reichshoffen; A Troop in Reichshoffen; B, C, and H1 Trps in Neiderbronn; E Troop and F Company in Overbron. Sq Hq on road between Neiderbronn and Reichshoffen. Entire squadron closed at 191800A.

20 March: Troops B and C had been billeted in a five story hotel in Neiderbronn. At 1345A an explosion occurred which blew off one entire end of the building. It is believed that this was caused by a cleverly concealed time charge placed several days previously by the retreating Germans. The previous afternoon the railroad station in the same town of Neiderbronn had blown up without apparent cause, so delayed charges were anticipated to be found elsewhere in town. Before moving into the hotel the troops had instituted a thorough search and found nothing to indicate the building was mined. In addition it had been used by an American clearing station for two days before our troops' occupancy. A quick check of the troops' personnel revealed that there were some twenty five men trapped under the debris, and work was commenced immediately to dig them out. In the course of one hour all but seven had been removed, given first aid on the spot and evacuated for further medical treatment. Aid man Pfc Rotolo heard a faint cry from beneath a pile of rubble three stories high and after two more hours of digging Pfc Haney was located beneath a two ton slab of concrete, held clear of his body only by the frail support of broken furniture and rubble. This work was accomplished under extremely hazardous conditions, as the debris was piled in such a manner that there was constant danger of its shifting and collapsing upon the rescue workers. It took six more hours of work under these conditions to free Pfc Haney, with Major Rousek, and Pfc Rotolo working in shifts with hammer and chisel in such a cramped space that only one man at a time, by lying flat on his stomach and wriggling into the opening, could manage to work at the task. In the midst of this another wing of the building crumpled and critically disturbed the existing pile of rubble. On two occasions, the work relaxed long enough for Captain Canter to administer plasma to Pfc Haney. At 2100A the concrete had been chisled away enough to remove Pfc Haney and Captain Canter applied splints to his leg and arm before carrying him out of the crevice and down the perilous descent of the unsteady mass of debris.

Excavation work was continued and on March 30th there were still two bodies missing. The results of this tragic explosion were tabulated as 16 KIA, 6 KIA, and 2 MIA.

21-23 March: These three days were spent in the same location, Troops C and B spending both days in re-equipping and supplying to repair the losses sustained in the explosion.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

A range was laid out and the knee mortar was fired by the reconnaissance troops with excellent results. Officers and communication personnel of the Squadron received instruction in the use of the VI Corps code. All members of the squadron participated in orientation discussions, and the map progress of our armies was closely followed. A squadron traffic control post was manned on the Heiderbronn-Reichshoffen road.

One platoon of A Troop was sent to investigate a reported enemy VHF station at 077439, located several miles behind forward elements of the Corps at the time. Upon arriving at the location, Lt. Dickson found this station, one operated by an American Tank Destroyer Battalion.

24 March: The Squadron received its first mission from VI Corps. It was given the task of guarding the German-French border in the Corps area. The reconnaissance troops sent out the guard details in the early morning and all posts were manned and lateral contact established with the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron on our left and the 3rd Division Infanterie Algerian on our right by 1145A.

At 1330A the squadron left its location in the Reichshoffen area and closed in Wissembourg 1630A. Squadron Headquarters and Headquarters Troop set up on the south-western outskirts of Wissembourg; Troop B on the north side of town; Troops A and C in Climbach; and Troop E and F Company near Riedseltz.

While a road block at the road crossing the border at 069501 was being removed by Troop C, a booby trapped charge was set off, wounding five men.

During the day four civilians were picked up, endeavoring to cross the border. These were turned over to the CIC for investigation.

25 March: The Squadron continued to guard the border between France and Germany on the right half of the VI Corps zone. New posts were set up and E Troop and F Company took over the right sector of the Squadron zone. A Troop command post moved to Windhof; F Company set up in Altenstedt.

The various posts picked up a total of thirteen civilians attempting to cross the border and turned these over to VI Corps CIC for investigation.

26-28 March: The Squadron continued in position along the border making slight switches of positions, reorganizing, and taking over additional area to the west.

29 March: The squadron was relieved of its mission with the VI Corps and alerted to move north back to the First Army and V Corps. The move was commenced at noon and all units marched 130 miles to Etain, France where they bivouaced for the night.

30 March: The Squadron proceeded on their march, moved 195 miles and arrived at Zulpich, Germany at 1800A.

31 March: The Squadron moved 124 road miles east from Zulpich and closed at Nauleron, Germany at 1600A with all vehicles in running order. At 2000A A, B, and C Companies of the 2nd Ranger Battalion were attached to the Squadron, and the Squadron prepared to move to the north.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

During the month the following men returned to duty with the Squadron:

Tec 5 Robert W. Howe, Troop A
Pvt James D. Cooksey, Troop B
Pvt Rennie Cole, Troop C
Tec 5 Anthony R. Schialdone, Troop C
Tec 4 Glenn F. Morgan, Hq Troop
Tec 5 Wing O. Nuey, Hq Troop
2nd Lt Eldon A. Moak, Company F
Sgt Leslie O. Hobson, Troop E
Pfc Eli Goldstein, Company F
Pfc John E. Conner, Company F
Pfc Frank A. Madeo, Troop B
Pvt Alan M. Freeman, Troop A
Cpl Sam S. Dotson, Troop C
2nd Lt Marion F. Anderson, Troop C

On the 18th of March at Knoersheim, France, Colonel Dolph, Commanding Officer of the 103rd Cavalry Group, presented the following awards to members of the Squadron:

Silver Star

S/Sgt Raymond E. Mac Donald, Troop B

Bronze Star

Captain Elmer L. Rogers, Troop C
1st Lt Joseph O. McAloon, Troop C
Pvt Rennie Cole, Troop C

Certificate of Merit

Tec 3 Harold D. Simonson, Med Det.

The highlights of March were the successful operations from the Roer to the Ahr in the early month, the return to V Corps, and the success of new tactical methods, namely the team-up with the Rangers and the employment of the light tank M5A1 in the reconnaissance troops.

The troops performed splendidly in the Roer-Ahr pursuit offensive. The training in February together with the experience gained in open warfare last September paid off handsomely. The troopers found themselves to be veterans without having realized the fact. Mistakes and malfunctions which used to plague us in September were behind us, and the action took on the character of a well coordinated and finely trained team. This success is attributed to the exceptional ability and fighting spirit of the Rangers, as well as to the fine performance of the cavalry troops.

The intense pride of the squadron in being V Corps troops manifested itself in the unconcealed and universally expressed delight of all ranks when orders came to return to V Corps, after a two weeks' tour of duty with Seventh Army. The Squadron sincerely hopes that our fortunes will always be those of V Corps.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The team-up with the Rangers proved to be a natural. The reconnaissance troops gave to the Rangers the fire power and mobility they need, and the Rangers gave the Squadron the fighting numbers it needs.

The reconnaissance tanks proved themselves satisfactory in every way. All officers of the reconnaissance troops expressed their satisfaction with the reconnaissance tanks. Studies are now being made to determine exactly how many more to request of the First Army Armored Officer.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED